

СБОРЯНОВО СВЕЩЕНА
ТРАКИЙСКА ЗЕМЯ
SBORYANОВО A SACRED
THRACIAN LAND



The Sboryanovo archaeological reservation covers the territory of one of the most remarkable centres of religious and political life in ancient Thrace. It functioned during the Iron Age /1st millennium BC/ in the lands of the Getae and experienced its highest upsurge in the Early Iron Age /9th-7th century BC/ and during the Early Hellenistic Age. Its planning was subordinated to a concept seeking harmony between Nature and what human hands have created in the heart of Nature.

Several sanctuaries and cult sites were built in the centre of the settlement covering about 16,000 sq.m., in the valley of the picturesque Krapinets river and along its two banks. More than 100 tumuli were localized in the periphery of the settlement, in the highest places.

At the very heart of the settlement, in the courtyard of the Alian monastery called Demir Baba /"Iron Father"/, there used to be a Thracian sanctuary from which remains dated to the 4th-1st century BC have survived to this day near the springs /1/. The traces of life during the prehistoric period, as well as the contemporary ritual practice in the region of the monastery, testify to millennia-long cultural traditions.

One of the earliest sanctuaries, founded as early as the beginning of the 1st millennium BC and functioning until the 4th-3rd century BC, was localized on the high plateau to the west of Demir Baba Teke, in the Kamen Rid locality /2/. In the 4th-3rd century BC the area to the west of Demir Baba Teke, near the hydroelectric power station /3/, was also surrounded by stone walls, but its interpretation as a fortified settlement has not been confirmed by research carried out in the latest archaeological seasons. Most probably a new sanctuary started functioning here during the Early Hellenistic Age and continued the traditions of the sanctuary near Kamen Rid.

Stone walls that are still visible on the surface surrounded pits and stone constructions - rectangular, round and oval - built during the Hellenistic Age in the area between Kamen Rid and the tumuli of the western necropolis, in the Novite Korenezhi locality.

Impressive walls of three large buildings, subordinated to a unified planning, are localized in the Lyulyakoviyat Grad locality, in the river valley, near one of its most picturesque meanders. They belonged may be to a residence, built by the gaetic kings on the sacred land.

The earliest among the tumular necropolises surrounding the settlement is found in the Nivata Na Pevetsa locality /4/. It is dated to the Early Iron Age and is connected with the first period of the flourishing of the settlement.

The western and the eastern necropolises of Sboryanovo are the most impressive. Preliminary observations associate the different groups of tumuli with the mirror images of some of the constellations bearing the popular names of "Plough" and "Berenica's Hair". Various objects and rich grave goods have been found in the tumuli investigated so far. Some contain only animal burials or valuable objects, others are empty.

Three stone tombs with semicylindrical vaults, localized close to one another, have been discovered in the northern end of the eastern necropolis. The tomb under Ginina Mogila mound, i.e. the Sveshtari tomb, is a unique monument of Thracian

sepulchral architecture and it is of world significance /5/. Together with the other two elegant but smaller twin-tombs, it formed a unified architectural complex, created in the last decades of the 4th and in the beginning of the 3rd century BC /6/. The tallest tumulus of the settlement /20 m high/, known as the Big Sveshtari Tomb, occupies the central position in the southern group of tumuli of the eastern necropolis.

The planning of the settlement, the character of the different cult sites, the sculptured figures of the ten caryatids in the tomb under the mound Ginina Mogila, symbolizing the Great Goddess-Mother, as well as the votive inscription to the goddess Phosphoros /Artemis/, found near the hydroelectric power plant, associate the settlement with the solar-chthonic cult which was most worshipped by the Thracians, personified by the Great Goddess Artemis and the solar god Apollo.

Oral tradition among the population today has preserved the name Dausdava - a name mentioned by Ptolemy. Dausdava /The City of Wolves/ was probably the most ancient name of this Getic centre that has survived to our days. This hypothesis is supported both by its localization on the map of Northeastern Bulgaria, and by the numerous dog burials discovered in that part of Thrace and in the tumuli of the cult centre. According to another hypothesis, this was also the place of the residence of the Getic ruler Dromichaetes-Helis, where he received the defeated Macedonian ruler Lysimachos.

The charm of Dausdava can be sought not only in the beauty of the finds or in the anticipation of future excavations. It is also unique with the living ritual traditions to this day. The name "Sboryanovo" means a meeting-place. The ancient tradition of adorning the trees around Demir Baba Teke with coloured ribbons and pieces of clothing has survived among the local population - Alianes and Christians to this day. The innumerable candles lit on the rocks and left as an offering in the sanctuary of the Iron Father suggest the force of the fiery solar cult.

The clay /7/ and metal finds /8/ in Sboryanovo and the perfection of the architecture testify to the high level of Thracian culture and to the faraway contacts of the Getic centre with the trade and religious centres along the entire Eastern Mediterranean region. Although traces of life during earlier and later periods are not lacking, Sboryanovo-Dausdava has nevertheless remained the place associated with one of the most important centres of ancient Thrace for centuries.

Diana Gergova



Входът на гробницата
The Entrance of the tomb



Източният некропол с голямата Свещарска могила
The Eastern necropolis with the Big Sveshtary tumulus



**Гробницата
 под могила 13
 The tomb below
 tumulus 13**

**Гробницата
 под могила 12
 The tomb below
 tumulus 12**



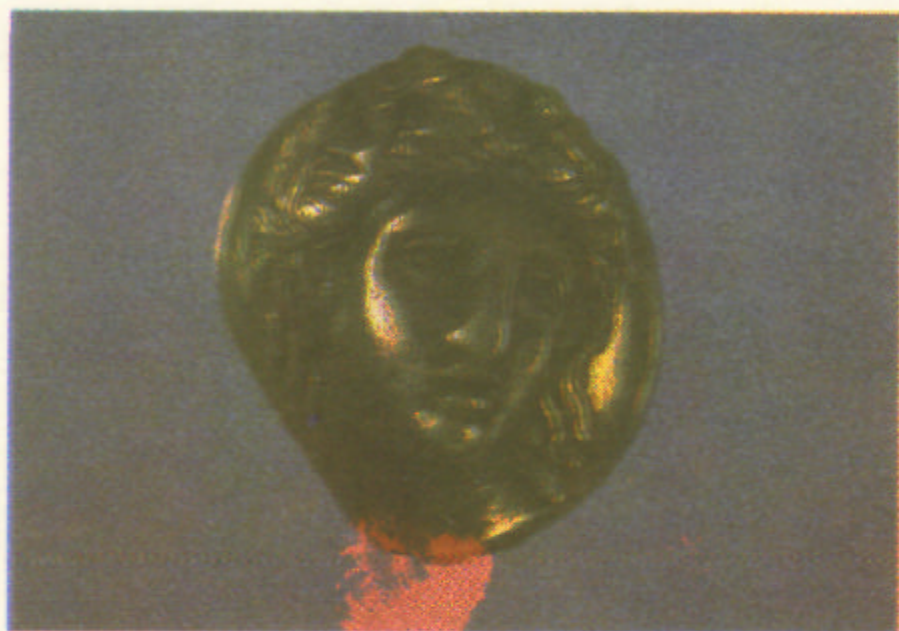


Светилището на "Камен рид". Камен кръг
The sanctuary at "Kamen rid". Stone circle

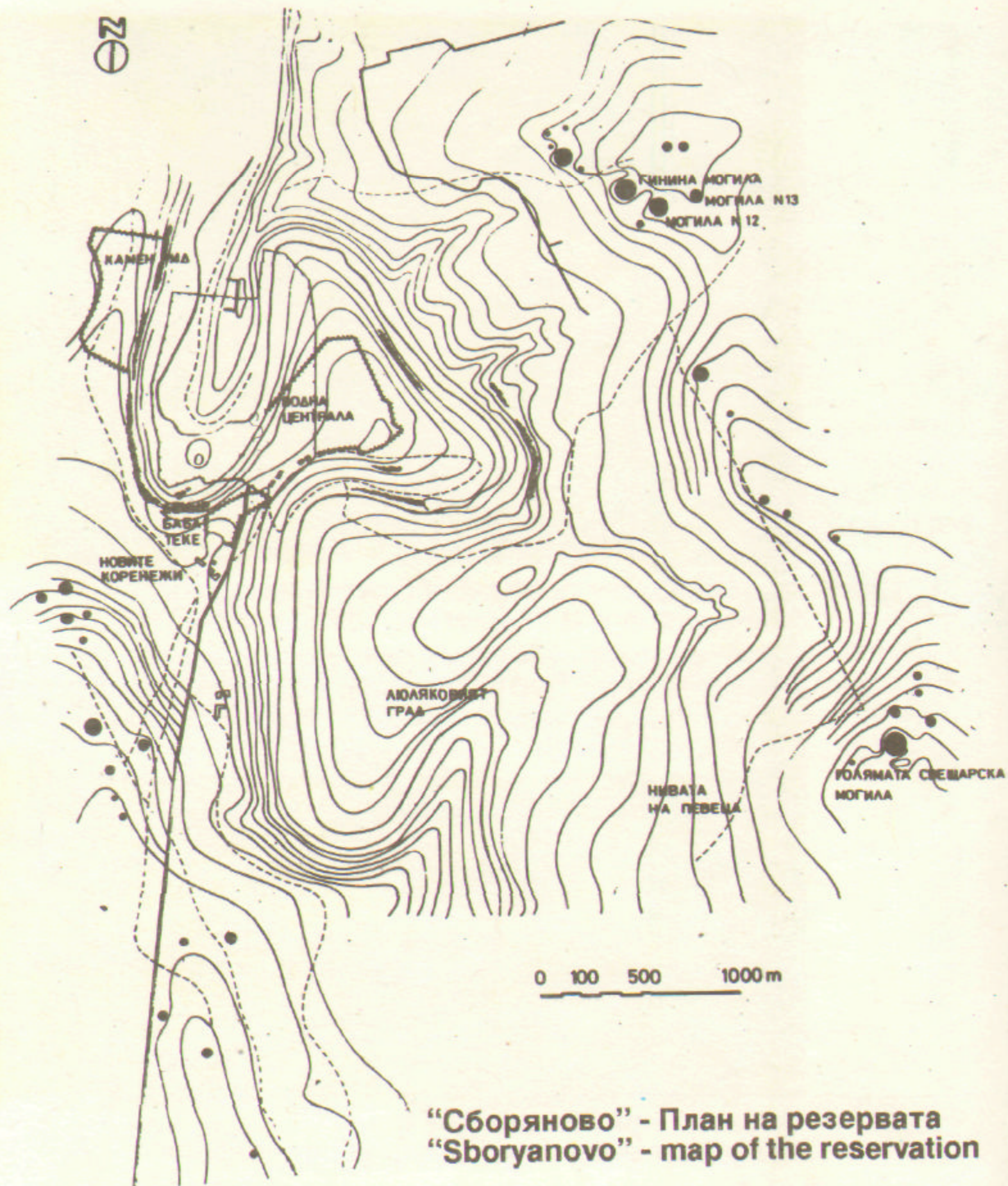


Обектът при "Водна централа"
The site near the "Hydroelectric power station"

Дионисова
сребърна плас-
тина. Източен
некропол
Dionysos Silver
plaque. Eastern
cemetery



Гробни дарове.
Могила 35. Западен
некропол.
Grave gifts.
Thumulus 35.
Western necropolis



Западният некропол
 The Western necropolis



**ПРИ МАНАСТИРА
“ДЕМИР БАБА”
/”ЖЕЛЕЗНИЯТ БАЩА”/
AT THE DEMIR BABA
MONASTERY**

Манастирът “Демир баба” и част от стената на тракийското светилище

The monastery “Demir baba” and part of the wall of the Thracian sanctuary



a/ Prehistoric Finds

The excavations at the 16th century monastery Demir Baba /Iron Father/ reveal the millennial living traditions preserved in that part of the fertile valley of the Krapinets river. Being surrounded by dense forests and offering excellent living conditions, the river attracted settlers in the remote antiquity. One of the two earliest tells in it /the second one being localized to the northeast of the Malak Porovets village/ is found immediately next to the Alian monastery and is dated to the Chalcolithic Age /5th-4th millennium BC/. Excavations outside the monastery courtyard revealed remains of wattle-and-daub dwellings, burials and numerous finds suggesting the high culture and the interesting religious notions of the population of the region during that time. The Chalcolithic Age was a period of upsurge and innovations in the economic life: in metallurgy and agriculture, as well as in the extended trade. The relatively small settlements were densely built. In addition to the stone and flintstone tools, the use of copper tools started towards the end of that period. There were magnificent thin-walled clay vessels with burnished surface, with incised and drawn ornamentation. Idol sculpture, represented predominantly by female figurines, reflects the important role of the fertility cult.

The end of the Chalcolithic Age was marked by profound changes in the appearance of the archeological cultures not only in the present-day Bulgarian lands, but also in a large part of Southeastern Europe. This led to a break in the Chalcolithic tradition and to the emergence of a new Early Bronze Age culture. Life there died down for several millennia.

Boryana Mateva

b/ The Thracian Sanctuary

An Early Thracian sanctuary emerged among the rock massifs rising along the river terrace during the Early Iron Age /end of 2nd-first half of the 1st millennium BC/, to develop into a natural and architectural complex in the second half of the 1st millennium BC.

The three rock massifs, which are now incorporated in the foundations of the mediaeval monastery complex, featured most prominently in the layout of the sanctuary during the pre-Hellenistic and Hellenistic periods /6th-1st century BC/. The pair of rocks built into its central part formed the nucleus. Of special interest is the bigger rock to the north, more than 2m high, with steep narrow steps hewn into the rocks and winding like a spiral. In their natural form the two rocks were probably standing close to one another, forming a narrow passage. It can be assumed that the rock fragment with hewn facade, whose secondary use in the later building can be seen, was placed on top at that time, and through a majestic natural arc helping to

form the solemn and ceremonious entrance to the world beyond.

The third rock massif, again more than 2m. tall, which served as external altar, can be seen at a distance of about 20m east of the central group of rocks. A wide arc-like niche is hewn on its interior facade and it collects the last rays of the sunset. A quadrangular sacrificial platform is hewn above the niche, with a small trough and a groove falling to the base, where the blood of the sacrificial animals was collected in a large vessel / pythos/.

The cult required also a closed chamber on the territory of the sanctuary. A primitive building existed at the foot of the central group of rocks, between it and the altar. Constructions emphasizing its cult nature were cleared and exposed among its burned ruins which prevented the more accurate reconstruction of its plan and outward appearance. At both ends there were square clay platforms - sacred trays on which the sacrificial gifts were offered - with two clay circles - altars between them, each 1m in diameter and 10 cm high at the centre, which represented the clay image of a part of a sphere surrounded by a wide rounded belt.

A sacred wall separated the sacred territory from its environment. The remains of the monumental and stone walls from the different construction periods, bearing the typical features of Thracian construction, are among the most impressive remains of a Thracian cult complex, preserved to this day.

The ruins of block construction without mortar were from a rectangular water reservoir supplied with water from a nearby spring. This guaranteed constant water reserves and was probably connected with the cult rituals.

Thus in the course of the development and construction of the sanctuary, the natural cult elements began to be complemented with new, man-made elements. During the period of its greatest flourishing /end of 4th-1st century BC/ the sanctuary was probably an important religious centre, connected with the political centre of the Getae, which was also localized in the neighbourhood, and it preserved its importance for several centuries.

Anna Balkanska

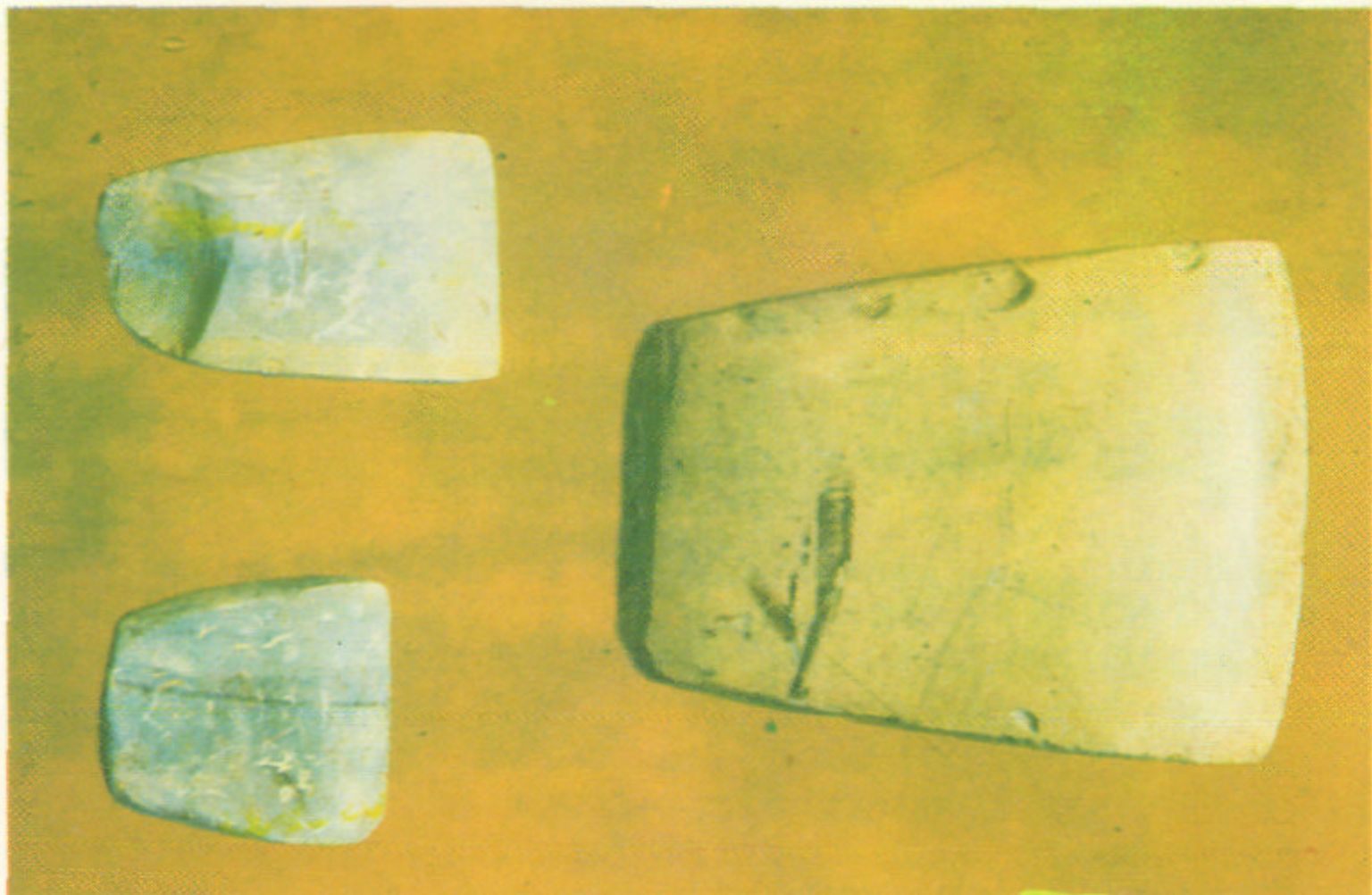


Глинени съдове - камено-медна епоха
Clay vessels - chalcolithic period

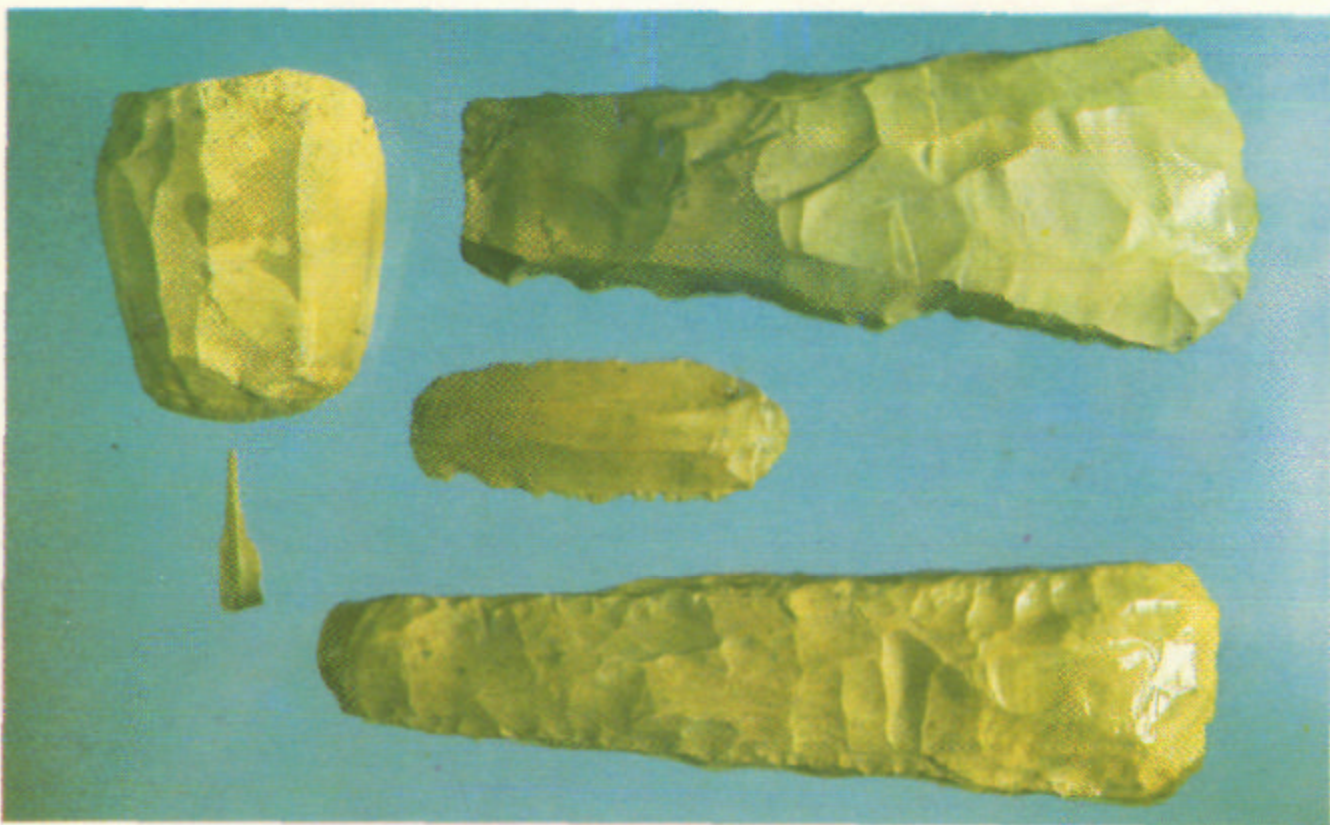


Глинени съдове и предмети. Еллинистическа епоха
Clay vessels and objects. Hellenistic period





Каменни и кремъчни оръдия - камено-медна епоха
Stone and flintstone tools - chalcolithic period



Глинени идоли - камено-медна епоха
Clay idols - chalcolithic period



Останкume om тpакuѝckомo cвeтuлuщe нpи мaнacтupa
The remains of the Thracian sanctuary at the monastery "Demir baba". Plan



Фpазмeнт oм yкpaceнo oгнuщe. Eлuнuстuчecka eпoxa
Fragment of a decorated hearth. Hellenistic period



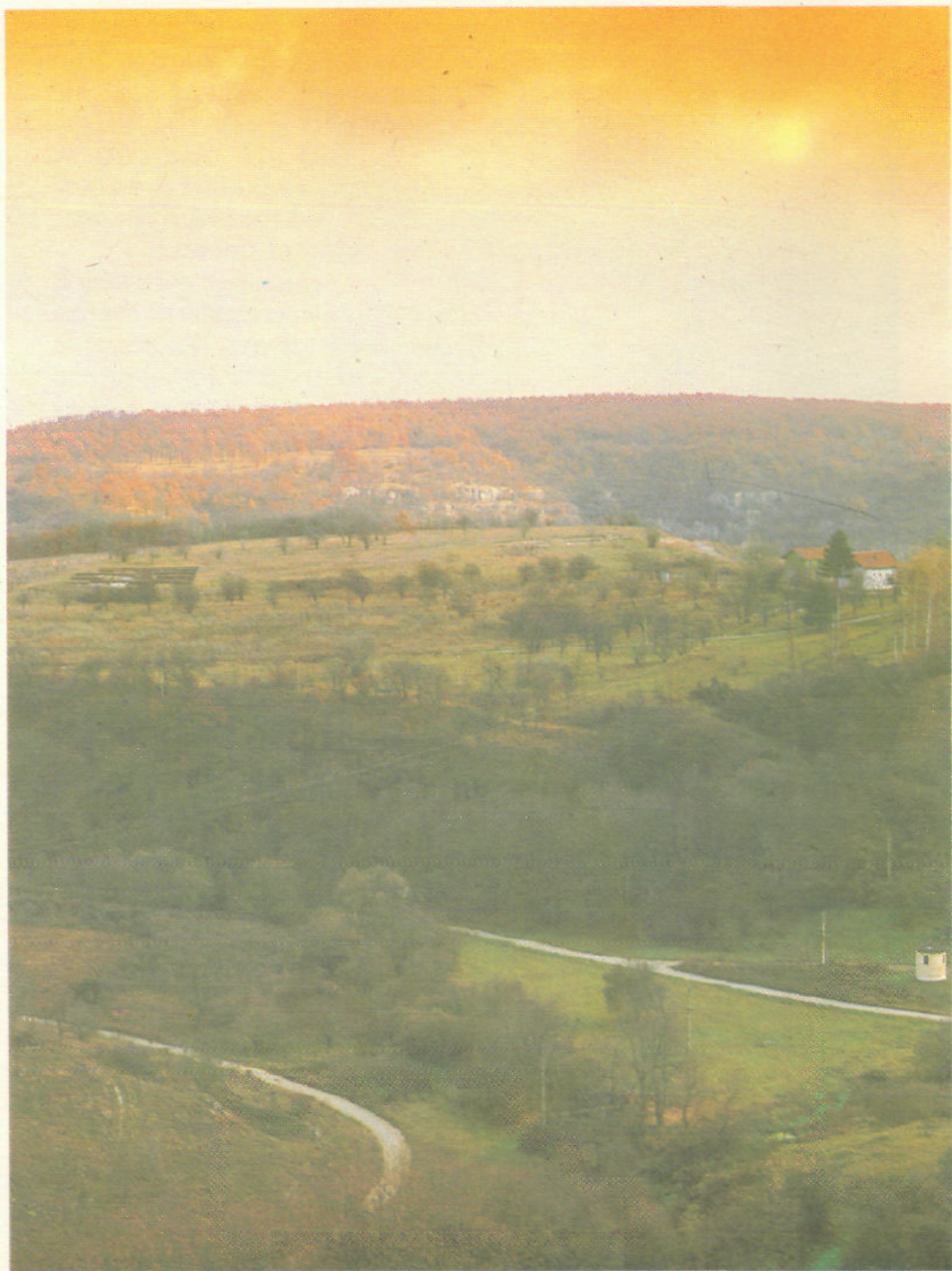
Бpонзoвa фyбyлa "Тpакuѝcku тuп"
Bronze fibula of "Thracian type"



Paзkoнкyme нa ceлuщeтo oм кaмeнo-мeгнaмa eпoxa
The excavations of the settlement of the chalcolithic period

**РАЗКОПКИТЕ ПРИ
ВОДНАТА ЦЕНТРАЛА**

**THE EXCAVATIONS
NEAR THE
HYDROELECTRIC POWER
PLANT**



There is an area of about eight hectares surrounded by stone walls on the relatively smooth plateau on which the hydroelectric power plant is situated, closed in on all sides by the deeply cut meandres of the Krapinets river. The fortification system is complex and monumental.

The fortification does not have correct geometric outlines and the walls follow the configuration of the terrain. The main fortification wall, 3.60 to 4 m. thick, has been preserved at a height of about 1.30 m. It is with two well-shaped facades made of large stone blocks. They are irregular in shape and rest directly on the limestone bedrock. The filling is of small and middle-sized crushed stones without mortar. In some sectors the main fortification wall was doubled by a second, interior wall of a similar thickness, but probably smaller in height initially and separated from the external wall by a narrow corridor. There are no towers or any other additional constructions on the walls. Only in the northern end there are perpendicular barrier protrusions which stick out of the wall.

In the southern wall there is an elaborate gate which probably provided the link to the eastern necropolis along the slope to the southeast, through the river's canyon. It is possible that another road led from the gate to the southwest, past the fortification wall. The first epigraphic monument was discovered in 1987 near the southern gate: a prismatic limestone block with an inscription in Greek reading "Menecharmos, son of Poseidonios, made a votive offering to Phosphoros". It is possible that the monument originated from a small sanctuary of the goddess who was known as patron-goddess of gates, fortresses and cities.

Traces of building were discovered in the interior of the settlement. On the floor of one of these buildings there is a hearth of beaten earth, used for cult practices.

Ceramic material features most prominently among the finds. Local pottery-making is represented by handmade thick-walled vessels decorated with plastic bands, divided by pinches, oblique hatches or tongue-shaped protrusions replacing handles. There are numerous fragments of wheel-turned vessels: plates, jugs, cups, etc. Imported ceramic material was also abundant: Attic white glazed kontharoi, fish dishes, small plates, lamps, askoi, etc., probably originating from the Greek colonies along the Black Sea. The amphora material is extremely rich, suggesting import of wine, olive oil and other goods. Many amphora seals have been found, with predominance of seals from Thasos, followed by those from Sinope, Herakleia Pontica and from some other as yet unidentified centres. Excavations have also unearthed other varied finds of metal ornaments and weapons, tools, etc. Animal bones are present in substantial amounts. Three coins have been found so far: a silver Alexander-type drachm, a silver coin of Histria and a

bronze coin of Kallatis, all of them dated to the Early Hellenistic Age. On the basis of the local and Greek ceramics, amphora seals and coins, the period during which the sanctuary existed can be dated relatively accurately to the last third of the 4th and the first half of the 3rd century BC.

The topographic closeness and the chronological correspondence rule out any doubts about the links of the site both with the Thracian sanctuary at Demir Baba Teke and with the large tumular necropolises on both its sides. Although archaeological research is still in its initial stage, the results suggest that the settlement was a major military, political, economic and cultural centre in the region of present-day Northeastern Bulgaria, probably the capital of a powerful Getic dynasty.

Maria Chichikova
Peter Delev

Южната порта
The Southern gate





Огнища пред южната стена
Clay Hearths near the Southern wall



Глинени съдове
Clay vessels



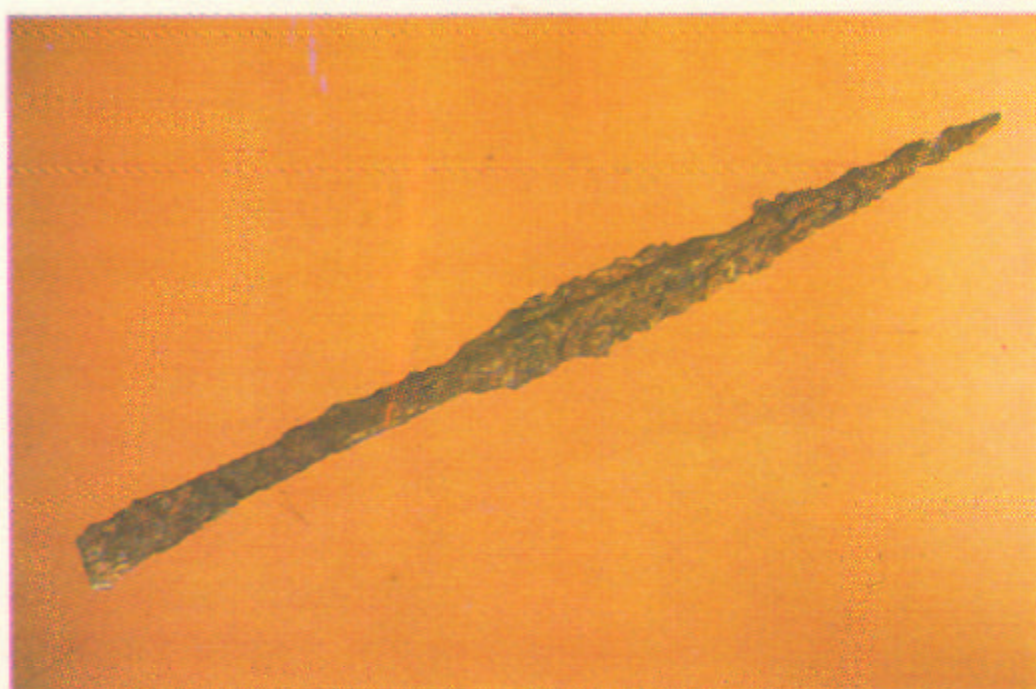
Глинен Кантарос



Местни и
вносни съдове
Local and
imported vessels

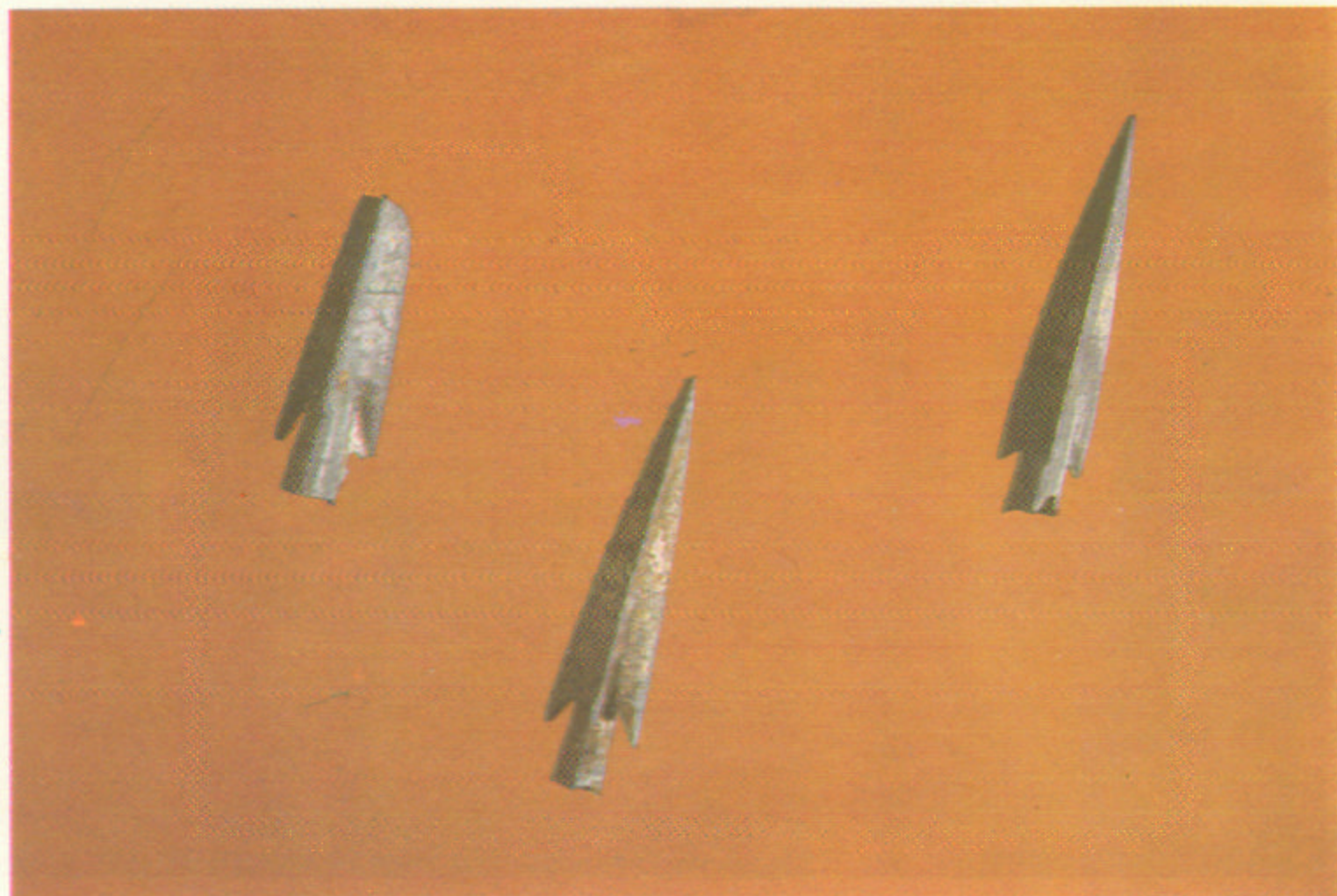


Амфорни печати
Amphora seals



Връх на копие
Spear head

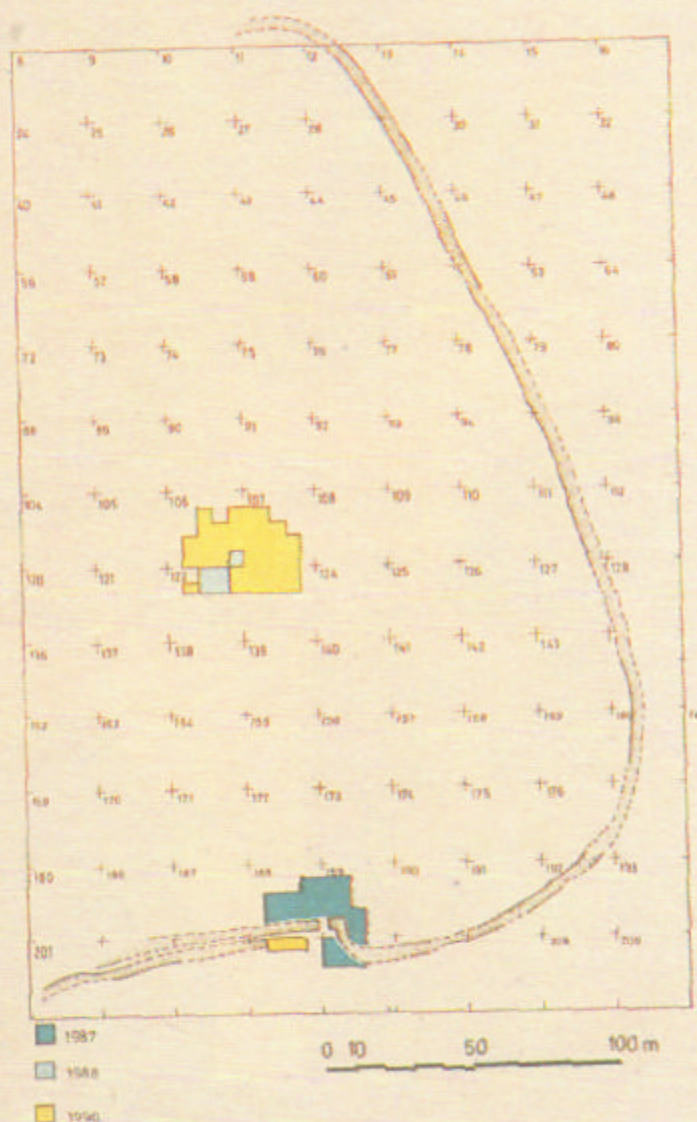
Бронзови върхове на стрели
Bronze arrow-heads



СБОРЯНОВО ВОДНА ЦЕНТРАЛА

ОБЩ ПЛАН

М 1'1000



План на обекта
Plan of the site

Глинен съд
Clay vessel



Разкопките при "Водна централа".
The excavations near the "Hydroelectric power plant".

**СВЕТИЛИЩЕТО В
МЕСТНОСТТА
“КАМЕН РИД”
THE SANCTUARY IN THE
KAMEN RID LOCALITY**



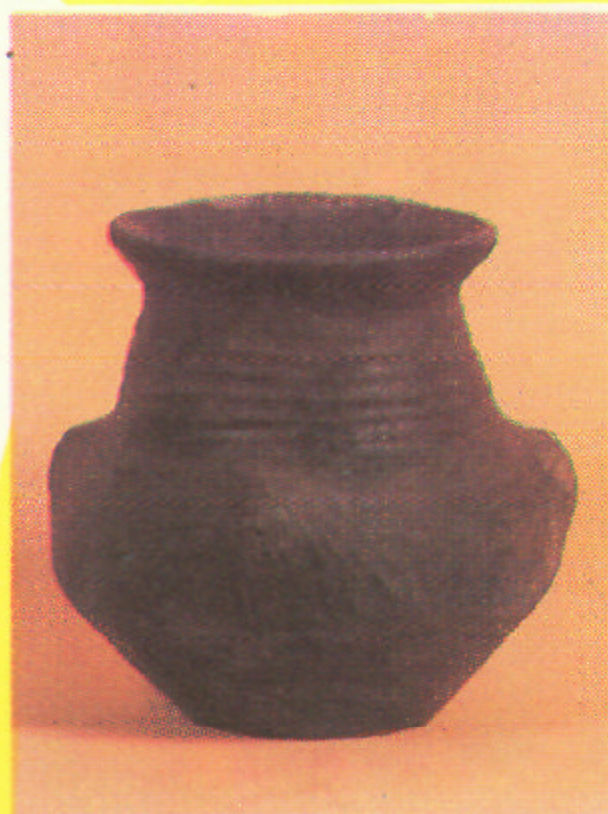
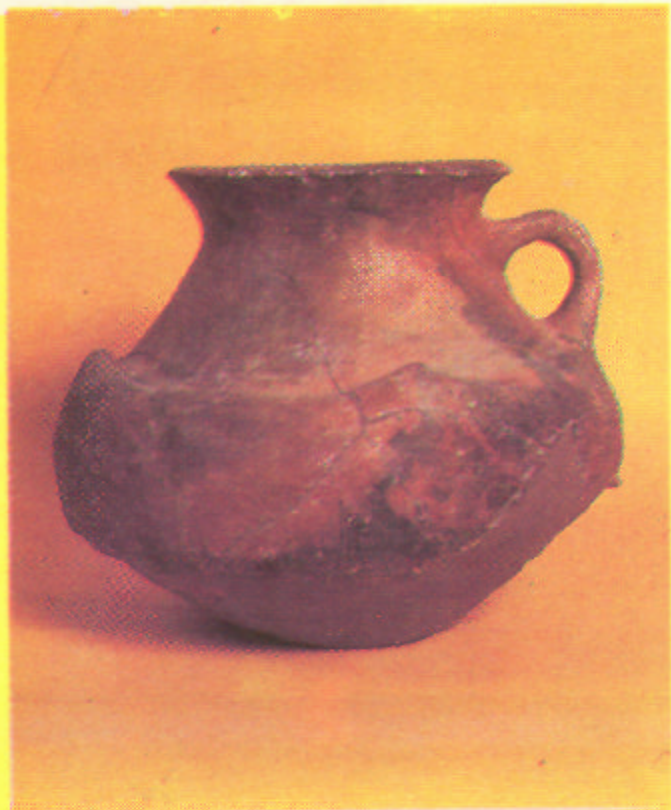
At the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, which also marked the beginning of the Iron Age in Thrace, the Getae started performing various ritual practices at the high plateau west of Demir Baba Teke, called Kamen Rid. The area surrounded by the stone walls that have survived to this day is about 4.75 hectares. The remains of the earliest wall of the sanctuary are visible in the southern corner. Many hearths were plastered on the rocks, along this wall. Large accumulations of clay vessels, clay idols and magic objects, animal bones, small vessels used in the cult practices, miniature models of vessels, articles of adornment and other objects were found around the hearths during the excavations. There are also many accumulations of ceramic materials, bones, articles of adornment and other gifts over the rest of the territory of the sanctuary. Human baby bones and fragments of a human skull hint at human sacrifices. Sacrificial offerings are discovered in natural pits.

The sanctuary probably acquired its final appearance in the 4th-3rd century BC. From the north and from the south it was surrounded with walls about 2m thick, preserved to this day with a height of up to 1m. Filling with small stones was used between the large stone blocks shaping the facades of the walls. A small rectangular niche was also built in the northern wall. A system of stone constructions existed in the northwestern part, with two oval-shaped constructions featuring centrally in it. The construction on the south represents a circle with a built-in large rock fragment and it is made of large stones. The construction on the north is oval in shape and its entrance is from the northeast. It is built using the same techniques with which the surrounding walls were built. The two circles formed a cult complex on the territory of the sanctuary, characterized by all distinguishing features of the old sanctuaries in the Eastern Mediterranean world, namely: walls surrounding the sanctuary, entrance from the south, absence of defensive constructions and sections associated with active ritual activities.

For the time being, the sanctuary in Kamen Rid is the earliest in the region of Sboryanovo. It testifies to the old Thracian roots of the Getic settlement founded at the dawn of the Iron Age. Together with the sanctuary situated below it in the courtyard of the Demir Baba Teke, near the shady springs in the river valley, the sanctuary in Kamen Rid seemed to form a cult complex whose position at two levels apparently emphasized the solar-chthonic character of the cult practised there of the Great Goddess Artemis and the solar Apollo. A narrow path still leads from the Demir Baba Teke to Kamen Rid, and the idea of their interlinking has been preserved to this day in the legend about the Iron Father /Demir Baba/ who left his footprint when he climbed from the Teke to the plateau in two strides.

The millennial tradition of the sacred place has not died down to this day. In addition to Demir Baba Teke, Kamen Rid and its surroundings are among the most favourite places, visited by all those who have cherished the traditions over the millennia and have bowed to the force of Nature.

Diana Gergova



Биконичен съд
Biconic vessel



Желязна фибула
Iron fibula



Глинени чаши
Clay cups



Глинени идоли
Clay idols

Глинени мъниста и магически предмети
Clay beads and magic objects



Глинени прешлени за вретено
Clay spindle - whorls



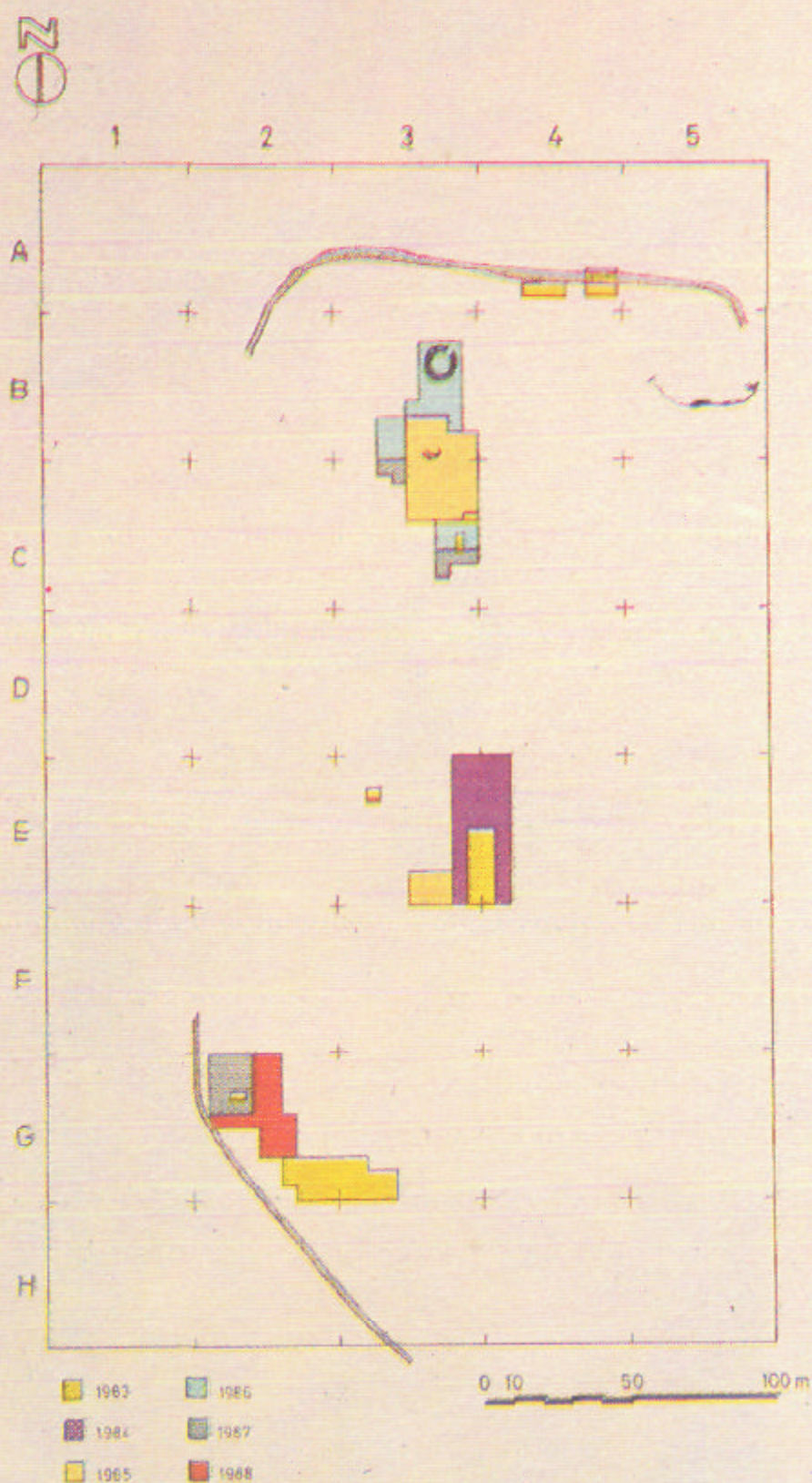
Северната стена
The Northern wall



Северният каменен кръг
The Northern stone circle

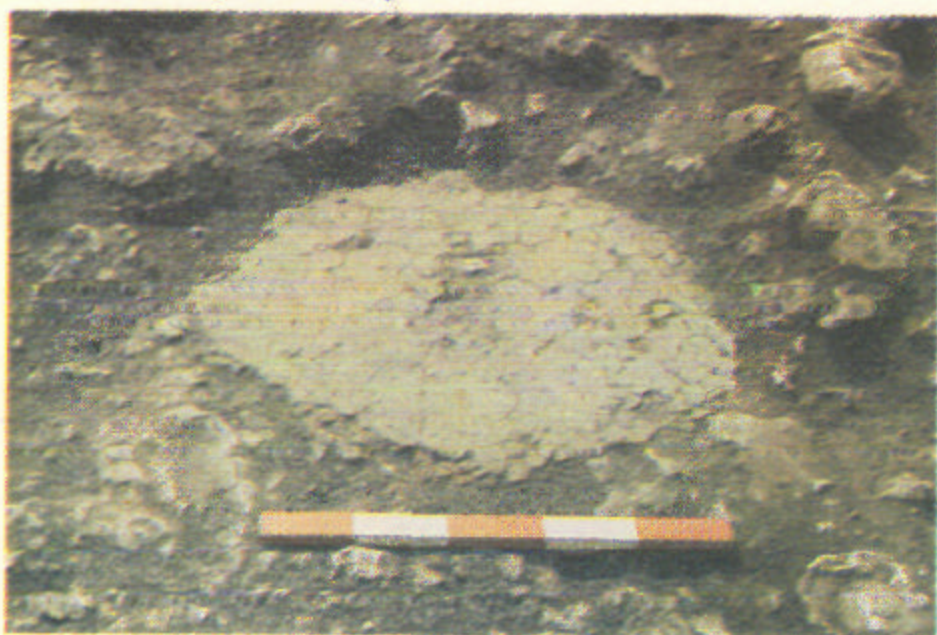


СБОРЯНОВО · КАМЕН РИД ·
ОБЩ ПЛАН ИЗКОПИ М 1'1000



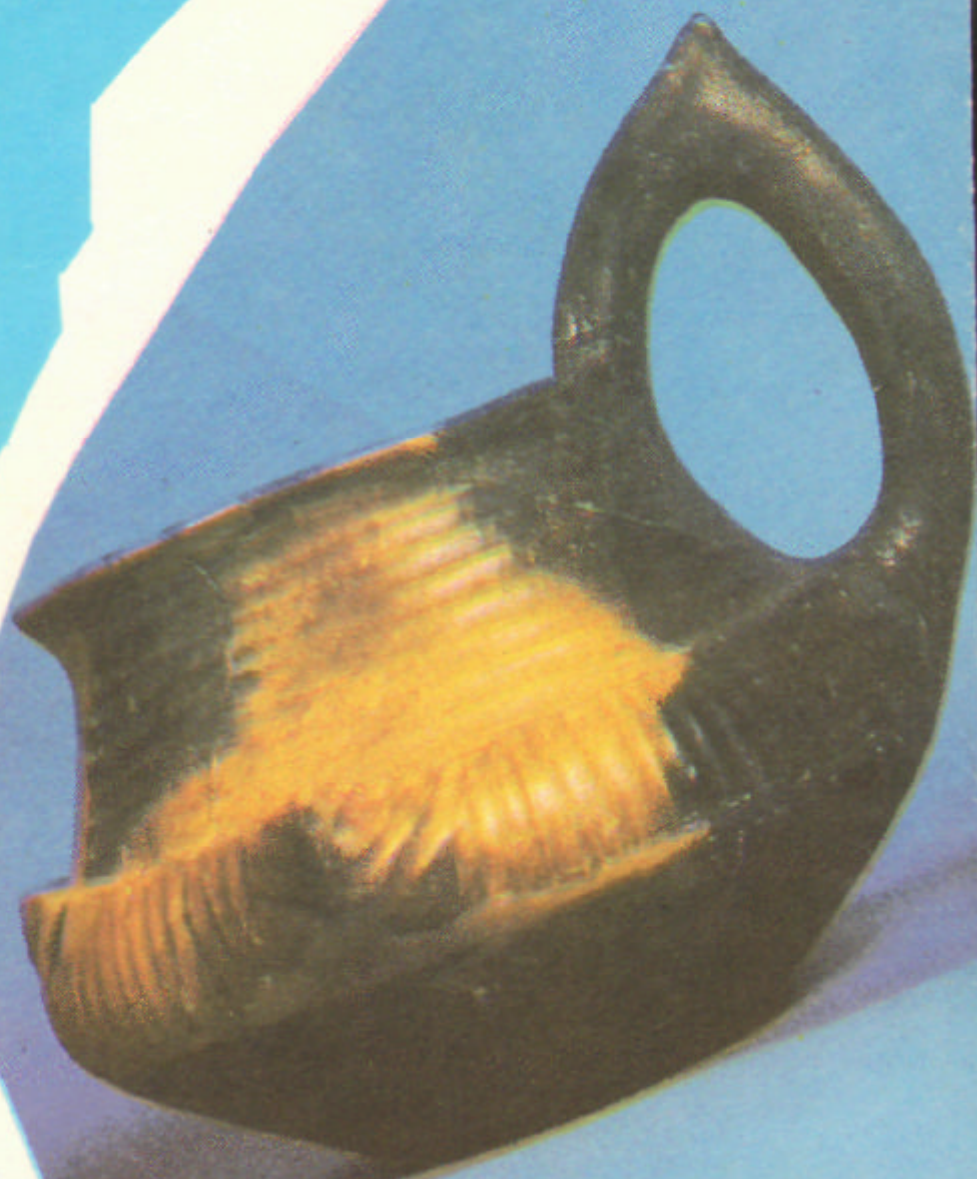
“Камен рид”. Общ план
“Kamen rid”. General plan

Глинено огнище
Clay hearth



“Камен рид”. Поглед от манастира “Демир баба”
“Kamen rid”. A view from the monastery “Demir baba”

THRACIAN CERAMICS



The ceramic material discovered on the territory of Sboryanovo is rich and varied, most numerous being the articles produced by local Thracian potters. They give rich information about the history of their production, about the contacts and artistic taste of the ancient Thracians.

Studies carried out in Sboryanovo so far led to the discovery of a large number of totally preserved or fragmented vessels, best represented among them being those dated to the Early Iron Age /11th-6th century BC/ and to the Hellenistic Age /end of 4th-1st century BC/.

The Early Iron Age ceramics, exclusively handmade, had a great variety of forms: plates with mouth rim turned inwards, kantharos-like cups, large biconic vessels, etc. Most of the vessels are with rich and varied decoration of stamped geometric motifs and ovoid ornaments, cannellures, buckels of different shapes and sizes, plastic bands, most frequently differentiated by pinching with the fingers.

The production of handmade ceramics continued during the Hellenistic Age as well. The vessels were made of coarser clay, with more admixtures and rough surface. The shape and decoration continued some Early Iron Age traditions, especially in plastic ornamentation. The wheel-turned vessels are to a great extent a further development of the old local forms. They are grey or red and varied in form: plates with mouth rim turned inwards, or with a complex profile and turned outwards, bowls, deep vessels with spheric or biconic bodies, etc. Some local forms repeated Greek imported forms.

The clay vessels performed varied functions. Apart from everyday needs, they were also used for libations and as votive gifts in the sanctuaries, the ashes of the deceased persons were kept in them in the necropolises, or they were placed in the tombs as grave offerings.

Darina Valceva



Глинени чаши. "Камен рид".
 Ранножелязна епоха
 Clay cups. "Kamen rid". Early Iron Age





Кантарос. Местна реплика на гръцка форма. "Водна централа. Елинистическа епоха

Cantharos. Local replica. "Hydroelectric power station". Hellenistic period



Тракийска чаша. Демир баба теке. Елинистическа епоха.

Thracian cup. Demir baba teke. Hellenistic period.

Тракийски съдове. Могила 35. Западен некропол. Елинистическа епоха.

Thracian vessels. Tumulus 35. Western necropolis. Hellenistic period.



Биконичен съд. "Камен рид".
Biconic vessel. "Kamen rid".





Керамични фрагменти с украса. "Камен рид".
Decorated ceramic fragments. "Kamen rid".



**THE NECROPOLIS
IN
THE LOCALITY "THE
SINGER'S FIELD"**

Могила I. Общ поглед
Tumulus I. General view



In the forest area to the west of the big Sveshtari tomb there are stone constructions left after the investigation of the five low tumuli with a stone embankment, 6x8 and 8x10 m in diameter. The tumuli have a fortifying ring in their periphery. After the first burial, the space surrounded by this ring was filled with smaller stones. Various rituals accompanied the piling up of the tumuli. Libations and purifications with fire or with live coals accompanied the drawing of the outlines of the tumulus and the preparations for the burial. During later ritual feasts on the spot to commemorate the dead /*trisnae*/, the vessels brought for the food and the drinks were broken.

A total of 25 burials were discovered in the course of the excavations: 20 with inhumation and the rest with cremation. Tumulus I was distinguished by the only burial it contains. The buried adult man was placed in extended supine position in its geometric centre. The man was very well built physically. In his hands folded over the body he held a spear in diagonal position, whose point was next to his head. For the time being, this position is without parallel in Northeastern Thrace and it emphasizes the military rank of the deceased. The fact that he was buried alone in the tumulus suggests a higher social status. Tumuli III and V contain four burials, tumulus IV - six, tumulus II - eight or more. In tumuli II and III the burials were performed at two levels: on the terrain and above the layer covering the primary burials. The discovered remains of male and female individuals in adult, adolescent and childhood age suggest that these were family tumuli. Tumuli II and III contain one or more cremation burials.

Cremation was performed on a pyre outside the tumuli. The ashes were placed in vessels, laid on the terrain and then covered with earth, which was accompanied by ritual breaking of many other vessels. There are three intermediary burials between the two burial rites. They were performed according to all requirements for



inhumation burials, but later the body of the deceased and especially the head were burned to a considerable extent. This probably reflects the Thracian faith in the purifying role of fire.

Exquisite cups with two handles were the most characteristic grave offering. In some burials one cup was placed next to the head of the deceased, in other burials there were richer offerings: two or three vessels at the feet, in addition to some metal object - bronze or iron fibula or small iron knife. Such burials were apparently for socially higher-ranking individuals. It can not be ruled out that the warrior in tumulus I was also a ruler, while the richest female burial in tumulus II may have been that of a priestess. Two bronze fibulae were placed on her shoulders, at her feet - two specially made vessels placed one above the other, with a small female idol placed in the lower vessel, a stylized figurine of a snake and small magic objects. The symbolism of the combination of vessels and objects placed in them suggests a link with the cult of the Great Goddess-Mother, whose priestess the buried woman probably was.

The objects discovered and the characteristic ceramic forms date the necropolis to the 10th-9th century BC, which makes it one of the earliest necropolises studied in Bulgaria so far.

Totko Stoyanov



Могила II. Глинен идол. Погребение на жрица
Tumulus II. Clay idol. Burial of a priestess

Глинени чаши - гробни дарове
Clay cups - grave gifts





Могила II. Бронзови фибули. Погребение на жрица

Tumulus II. Bronze fibulas. Burial of a priestess



Могила I. Погребение на воин
Tumulus I. Burial of a warrior

Могила I. Гробни дарове
Tumulus I. Grave gifts



**ОТ ЗЛАТО И
СРЕБРО
SILVER
AND GOLD**



Valuable monuments of Thracian art have been discovered in and around the territory of Sboryanovo. Some of them were unearthed during archaeological excavations of some of the tumuli, others were found quite by chance.

Three gold ear-rings and a silver phiale were found during the excavations of Ginina Mogila and the four smaller tumuli around it.

The ear-ring from Ginina Mogila is distinguished by the high level of workmanship and by the marked striving towards realistic rendering of details. The ear-ring is in the form of an open ring ending in a lion's head. Gem incrustation was a technique almost totally unfamiliar in the interior of ancient Thrace. This fine and expensive object found in the Sveshtari tomb probably came from some highly qualified workshop in one of the Greek colonies along the Thracian coast or from some workshop outside Thrace.

The ear-rings from tumulus No17 were simpler in form. The lion's head is rendered in a generalized manner, with no emphasis on details and without seeking additional effects. These ear-rings were probably made by a Thracian artist using an odd mould.

Ear-rings with a lion's head were very popular in the late 4th and early 3rd century BC. The emergence of this type of ear-rings is associated with a "lion's head" motif that was traditional for the Balkans, but came from the East.

Six gold rosettes were found in one of the tumuli investigated by G.Feher in the southern part of the eastern necropolis in 1930. Their decoration was made by hammering and each has a flat ring on the lower side.

Several of the accidental finds in the region merit special attention.

The silver head-piece from the territory of Sveshtari is ellipsoid in shape. The upper part is decorated with a round protrusion resembling a male human head, the lower part is decorated with a lion's head. On each side there is one image of a bird, with stylized bird's tails above them.

The gold protome of Pegasus was found on the



territory of the village of Vazovo. The total weight of the preserved part is 475.5 g. The body of Pegasus is rendered very realistically. The muscles are tense, the head is slightly inclined and surging forward. The lips, teeth and eyes betray high professionalism. Most researches note the specific features of the Thracian style in this masterpiece, characteristic of the 5th-4th century BC and manifested in all major works of toreutics at that time.

The magnificent works of a past age bring us back to the dynamic everyday life of the ancient Thracian civilization.

Zhivka Mihailova



Златни обици. Могила 17
Gold ear-rings. Tumulus 17

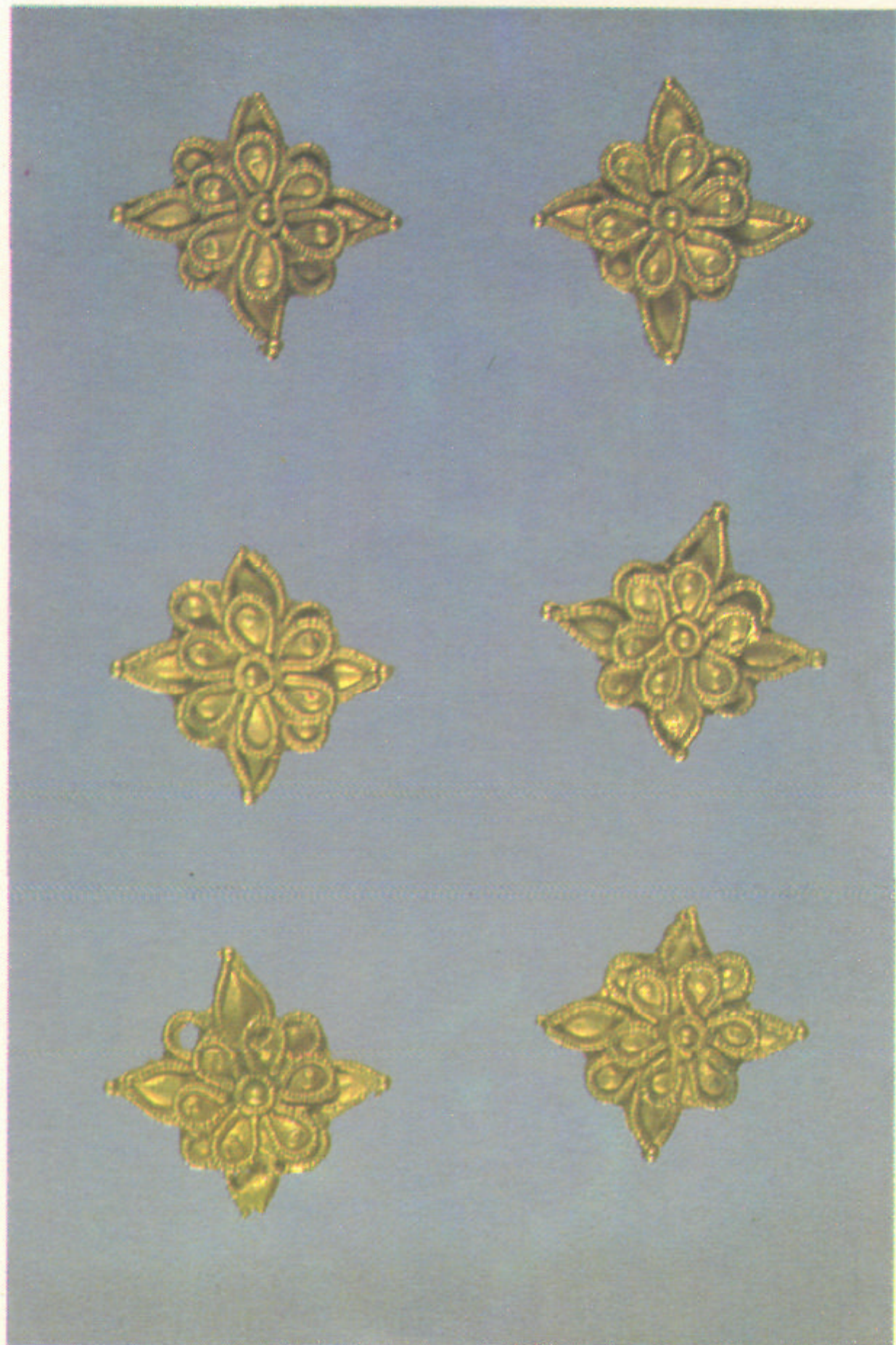
Златна обица. Свещарска гробница.
Gold ear-ring. Sveshtari tomb





Сребърна гривна. Малък Поровец
Silver bracelet. Malak Porovets

Сребърна фиала. Могила 19а
Silver phiale. Tumulus 19a

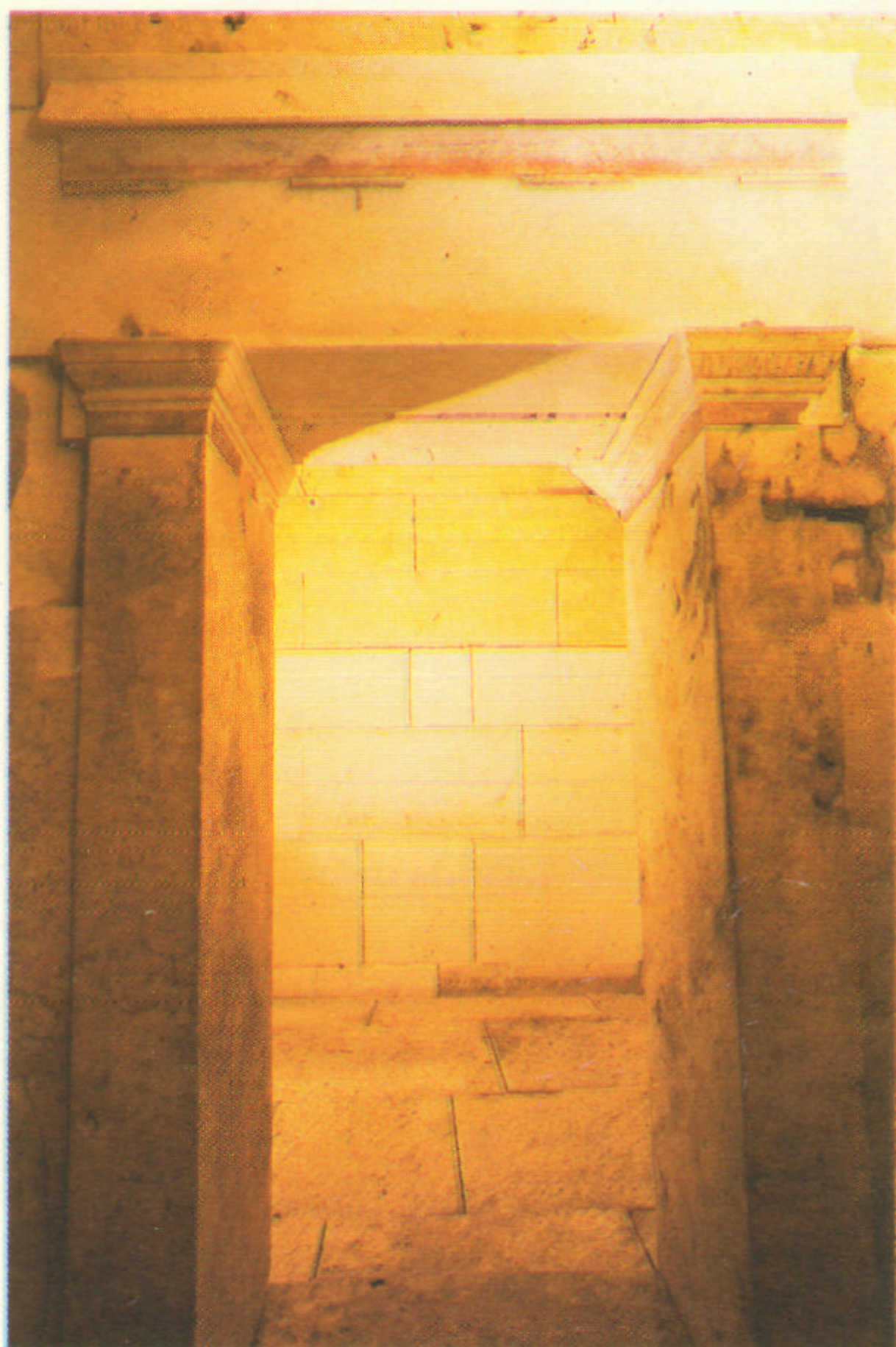


Златни розети. Източен некропол
Gold rosettes. Eastern necropolis



**ГРОБНИЦИТЕ
ПОД
МОГИЛИ 12 И 13**

**THE TOMBS
BELOW TUMULI
12 AND 13**



In the northern part of the eastern necropolis of Sboryanovo, immediately next to Ginina Mogila, there are two other high tumuli, denoted as Nos 12 and 13, in which two smaller tombs with identical plan were discovered in 1988 and 1989. They consist of an antechamber and chamber, and they are covered with semicylindrical vaults. The tombs closed with sliding doors which opened in opposite directions: to the east in the tomb below tumulus No 13 and to the west in that below tumulus No 12. Both tombs were built at the level of the terrain. Their walls are about 80 cm. thick and they were shaped by two vertical rows of limestone blocks, exquisitely treated on the inside. Earth was accumulated over them in three stages. The first stage consisted of the piling of a layer of crushed stone in front of and over the tomb, leaving the entrance free. During the second stage layers of two types of earth - light and dark - were piled up. The third layer, which gave the final shape of the tumulus, consisted of light earth only.

The tomb below tumulus No 12 had an interesting fate. Its inner dimension are 4.80 x 3.03 m., the dividing wall between the main chamber and the antechamber was 50 cm. wide, and the chamber itself was square. After it was built and used for some time, the tomb was destroyed - probably by an earthquake. The destructions were carefully cleared, part of the blocks were removed and after the ritual shaping of the stone arc in front of the preserved threshold at the entrance, earth was accumulated over it. Fragments of human bones and offerings suggesting complicated and magnificent funerary rites were found in the tomb and in front of it. Only small human bones have been discovered and they belong to four individuals - four men and four women - forming four pairs. One of them was buried after cremation and the bones were placed in the periphery of the tumulus. Fragments of local and imported vessels, parade armament /iron armour, torque and "Scythian type" arrows/, as well as sheep and swine bones, suggest the high rank of the people buried in the tomb.

The tomb below tumulus No 13 has been entirely preserved. Its inner dimensions are: length 4.26 m /2.73m for the chamber/ and width 2.47 m. It has a smooth facade and an entrance with a profiled frame. The grooves for the sliding

door, which were preserved on the side protected against the winds, show traces of multiple opening. The entrance to the chamber is flanked by two rectangular columns whose capitals are decorated with ovolo patterns painted red and blue. The white and yellow limestone blocks are arranged so as to produce a decorative effect.

Only a part of the bones of three individuals were found in the tomb, among them two femural bones of a youth with traces of incisions, bones of a middle-aged woman and of an elderly man /femural bone and skull/. Between them - half a dog skeleton and bones of a rooster. A gold profiled bead was found on the threshold. In front of the tomb's entrance, on the layer of crushed stone, there was an accumulation of bones belonging to the same individuals and animals, together with the fragments of a gilded iron pectoral, a gold bead, a gold spiral and ceramic fragments. The fragments of a broken stone door were found above the pit dug into the crushed stone layer.

Was the tomb plundered during the antiquity? This question, posed about all Thracian tombs, could receive a different answer here. Traces of multiple openings of the door suggest that the complicated burial practices of the Getae who, according to the ancient authors, practised the mysterious "immortalization rite", included also repeated entering in the tombs, probably also taking out and re-burying of a part of the bones and gifts in a different place. The actual piling of the tomb was associated with ritual acts at each stage: the first stage involved laying of bones and of part of the grave gifts in front of the entrance, the second - the building of a stone arc in front of the entrance and the laying of the fragments of the door. Thus a mystery is beginning to receive its explanation which will become deeper and more comprehensive in future excavations. There is no doubt, however, that tombs reveal unsuspected aspects of the burial practices of the Thracians who were filled with deep admiration for the dead and with profound mysteriousness. The Thracians attained their highest peaks in sepulchral architecture. With the exquisiteness of the masonry of the two small tombs and with their simple and elegant decoration, they followed the top achievements of Thracian sepulchral architecture from the Hellenistic Age, built on the territory of the Getic

Могил
Тумул

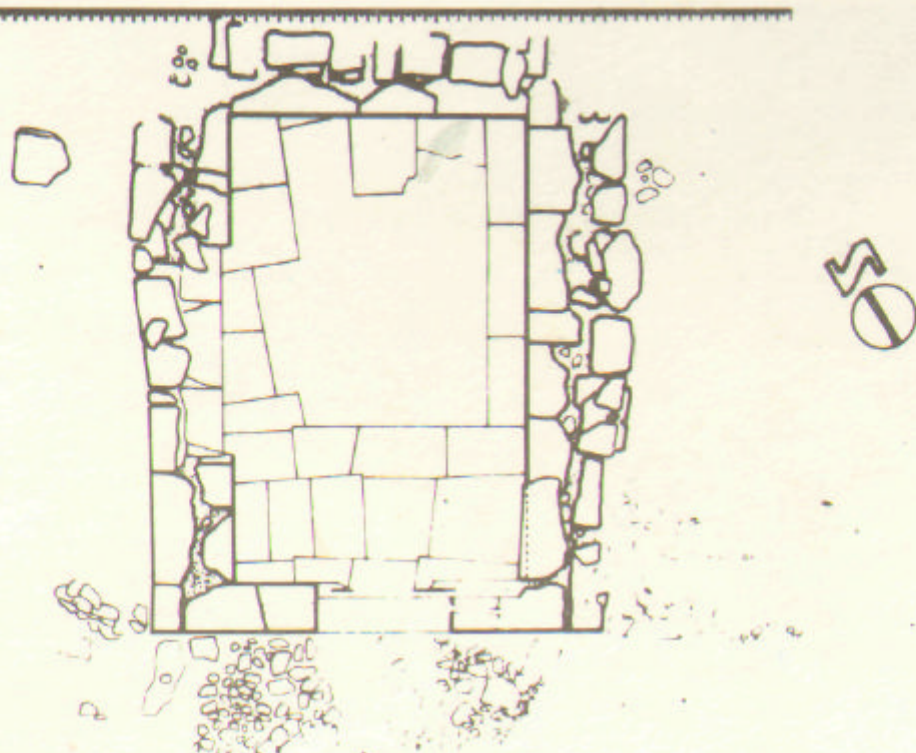
Входъ
The en

cantre. Their sliding doors were the first of this type to be discovered in the Balkans, but they were very well familiar in Asia Minor, in the Karyan-Lykian area. They are evidence in support of the theory that Thracian builders worked on the basis of a broad exchange of knowledge and ideas, but they followed a path of their own within the frameworks of the Hellenistic Age. on the basis of a broad exchange of knowledge and ideas, but they followed a path of their own within the frameworks of the Hellenistic Age. With their doors opening in opposite directions and with their identical plan, they apparently formed a unified sepulchral architectural ensemble, together with the Sveshtari tomb, and represented the nucleus of the group of tumuli localized around them. It was built and functioned along most general lines in the last third of the 4th century BC and in the first half of the 3rd century BC. It was preserved as a blazing trail on the sacred land of the Getae from the times of their greatest might.

Diana Gergova

а 13.
us 13.

т на гробницата с жлебовете за плъзгащата се врата
trance of the tomb with the grooves for the Sliding door

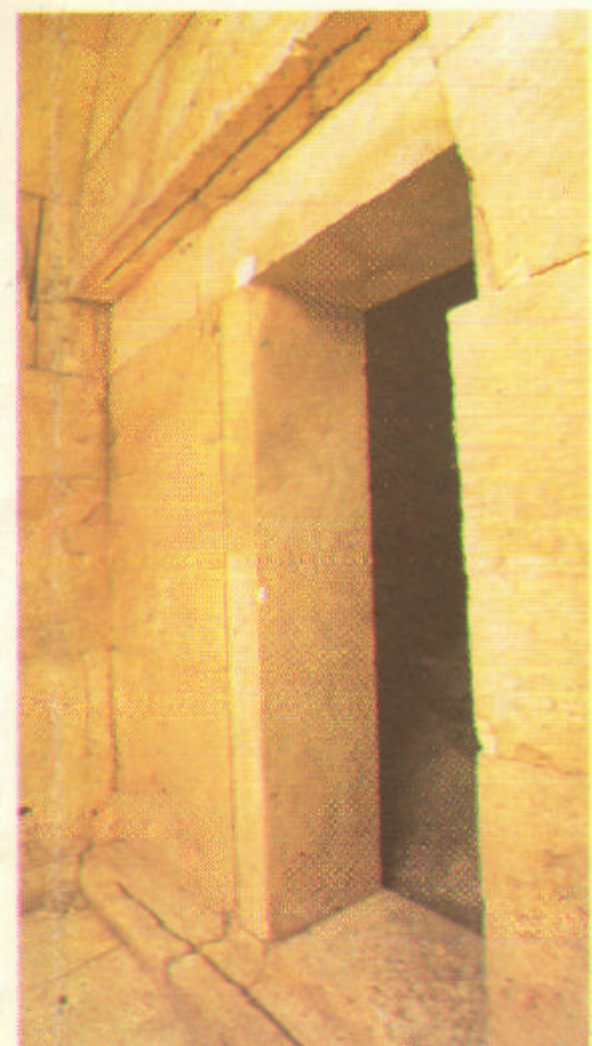


Могила 12. План на гробницата
Tumulus 12. Plan of the tomb



Могила 12. Гробницата
Tumulus 12. The tomb

Глинен съд. Могила 12
Clay vessel. Tumulus 12



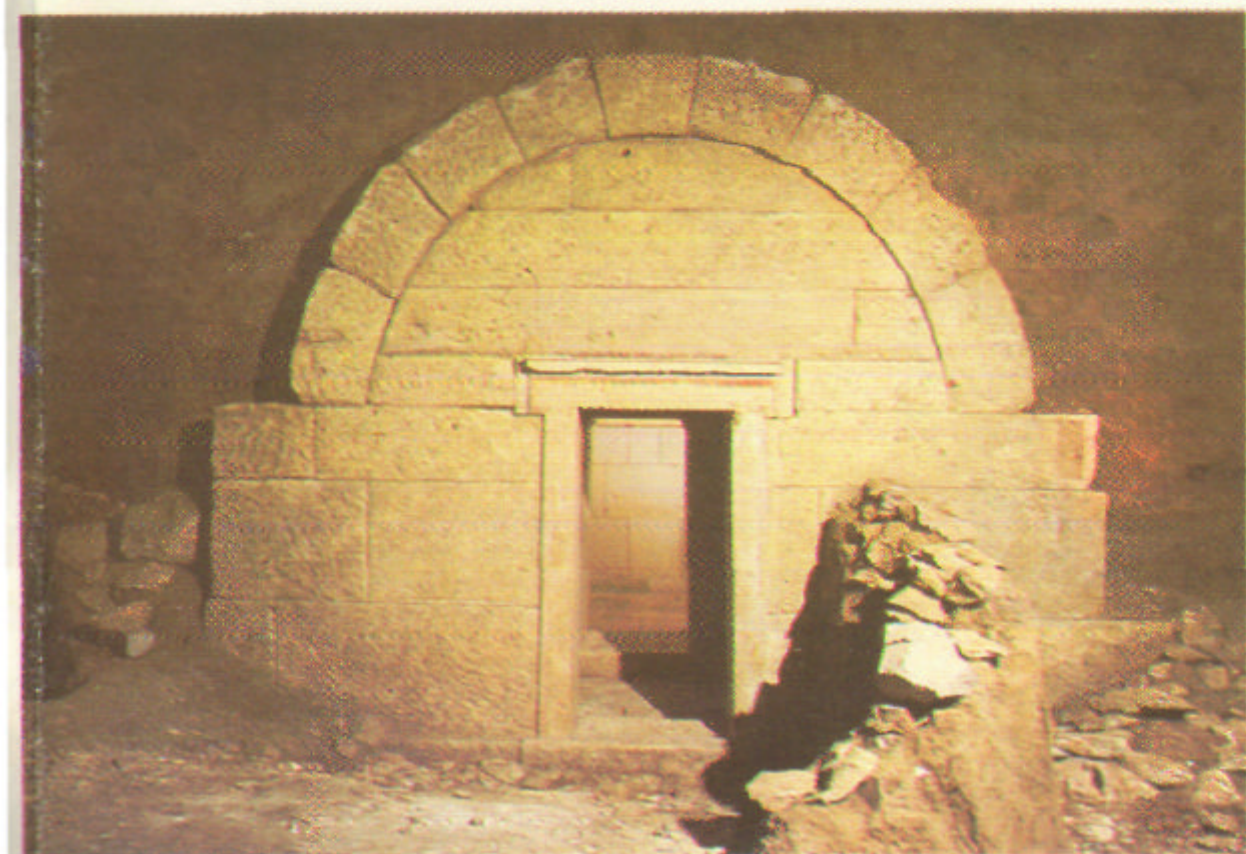


Могила 13. План на гробницата
Tumulus 13. Plan of the tomb



Могила 13
Tumulus 13

Могила 13. Фасадата на гробницата
Tumulus 13. The facade of the tomb



**СВЕЩАРСКАТА
ГРОБНИЦА
THE SVESHTARY TOMB**



The Thracian royal tomb near the village of Sveshtary, one of the most sensational discoveries during the past decade, was unearthed in 1982 during excavations of the Ginina Mogila mound rising in the northern corner of the eastern necropolis. The tomb consists of a corridor /dromos/ and three square chambers: antechamber, lateral chamber and main burial chamber covered by a semicylindrical vault. It is 7.50 m. long, 6.50 m. wide at the facade and 4.45 m. high in the burial chamber. It is built of large limestone quadrae linked with iron braces over which lead has been poured. The plan of the building offers a new interesting example in Thracian building practice. The vaults have close parallels in the sepulchral architecture of the 4th and the 3rd century BC in vast areas of the Hellenistic world, in ancient Macedonia, along the Mediterranean coast, etc. The decoration of the tomb is also executed in the spirit of the contemporary Hellenistic architecture and art. Its entrance is flanked by two rectangular columns /antae/ whose capitals have painted ovolo ornamentation. Above them there is an architrave plate with a frieze in relief, consisting of stylized bovine heads /bucrania/, rosettes and garlands. The Doric order has also found a very original application in the decoration of the main burial chamber. Four Doric and one Corinthian half-columns support an architrave and frieze of metopes and triglyphs. This architectural frame aptly comprises the sculptural decoration of ten female figures with hands raised high like caryatids, executed in high relief. The figures are about 1.20 m. tall, presented frontally, wearing long sleeveless dresses /chitons/ tied with a thin belt below the breasts. The draping of the dress below the waist is shaped as an inverted calyx of three Acanthus leaves ending like three beautifully upturned volutes. The stern faces of the women are framed by long hair which falls to their shoulders in plaits. Each caryatid figure is wearing a kalathos on her head. The hair, eyes and parts of the clothing and sandals are coloured in dark brown, yellow, red and blue.

The caryatids in the Sveshtari tomb are associated with the artistic and religious ideas of the epoch. The motif of the goddess with floral or snake-like legs occurs in the art of the entire Mediterranean region during the Hellenistic Age and it is one of the aspects of the Great Goddess, mistress of vegetation and fertility, of life on earth and beyond. With her hands raised high the goddess also personifies the forces of fate supporting the firmament over the graves of deities and mortals. There is no doubt that the same idea was invested in the caryatids decorating the tomb of the unknown Thracian ruler in Sveshtari. The peculiarity of the iconographic convention and composition of the

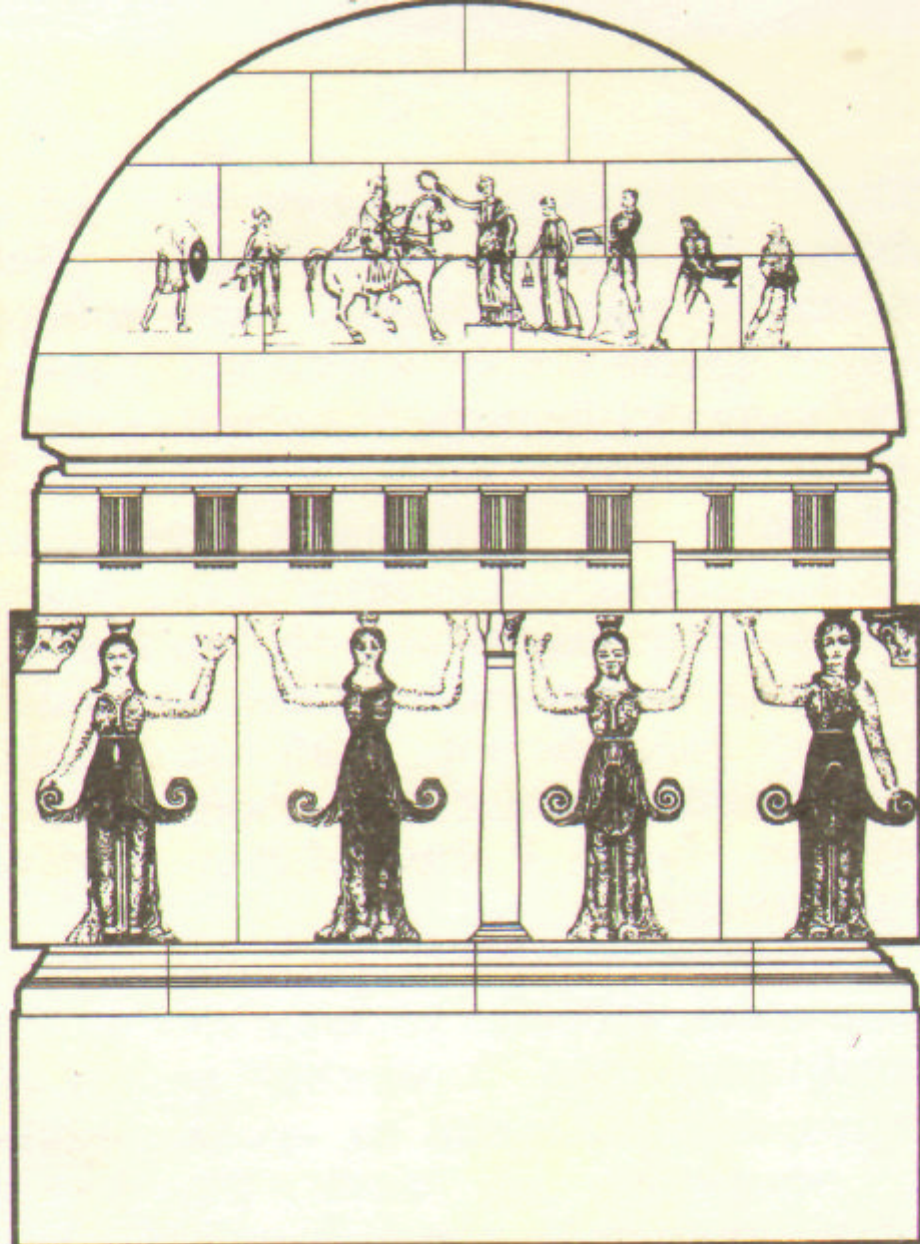
Централна гробна камера
The main chamber of the tomb

goddesses from Sveshtari reveal specificities which are characteristic of Thrace only and contribute to the elucidation of the symbolic nature of female images in the Thracian burial cult and ideology.

Two funerary beds, human bones and grave offerings were discovered in the central chamber. From the scattered stone details it was possible to reconstruct the facade of the tomb aedicula - naiskos, consisting of pilastres, cornice and a pediment, and closed with three stone doors. Being placed in front of the large funerary bed as a symbol of the boundary between life and death, the aedicula isolated the grave of the deified ruler - the most sacral part of the tomb - from the remaining space. The theme of the deification of the ruler is further elaborated in the drawing on the lunette on the wall behind the aedicula.

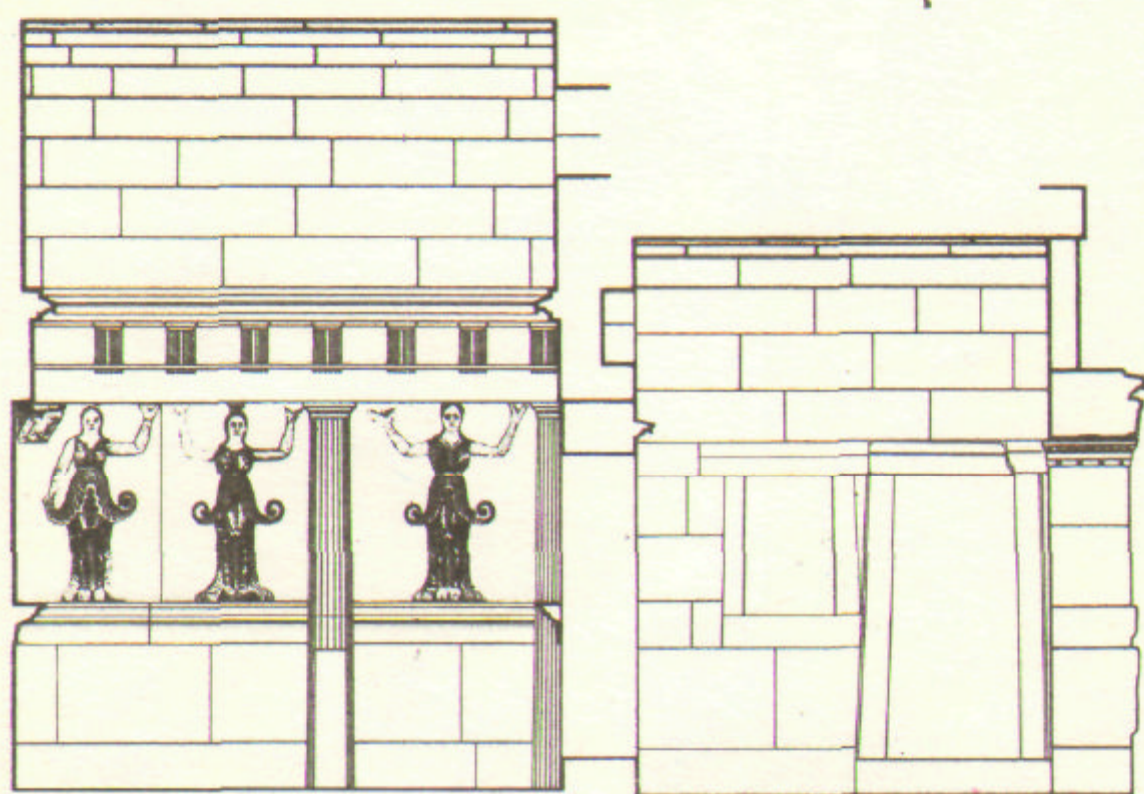
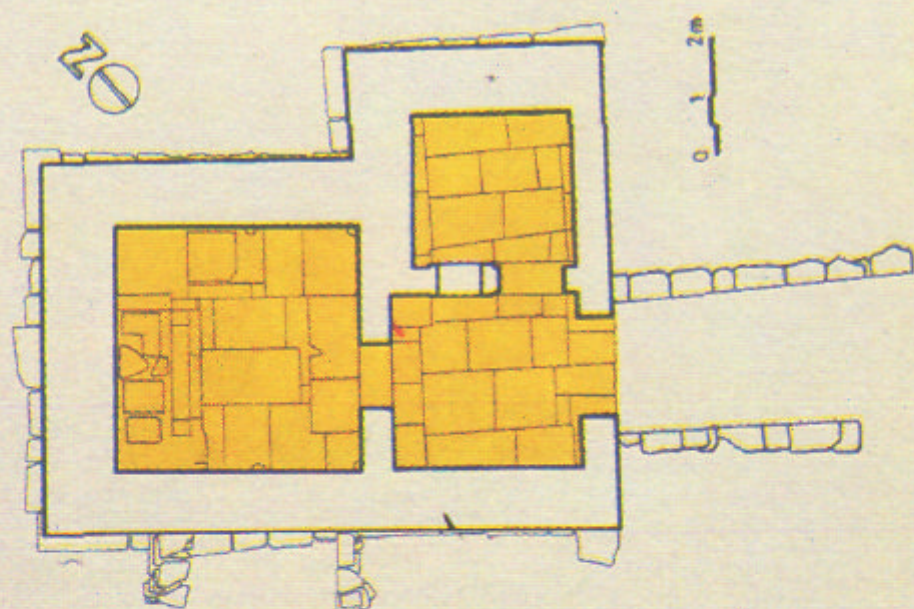
In the centre of the composition the goddess is offering a gold wreath to the ruler, rendered as a horseman facing her. On both sides of them there are processions of servants and armour-bearers carrying different gifts in their hands. In its composition and idea the drawing from Sveshtari is very close to the large frieze in the Kazanluk tomb. The time when the Sveshtari tomb was built /mid-3rd century BC/ coincided with the period of a great political, economic and cultural upsurge of the Thracian tribe of the Getae. The rich decoration and the perfect architecture of the tomb emphasize the political power of the ruler in whose honour the tomb was erected in the vicinity of the capital. There is no doubt about the existence of a major building and artistic school in the region, which successfully combined Hellenistic concepts with local Thracian religious and artistic ideas.

Maria Chichikova
Totyu Ivanov



Кариатида Caryatid





Свещарската гробница. План /а/ и сечение /б/

The Sveshtari tomb. Plan /a/ and section /b/

Входът на гробницата
The Entrance of the tomb





Свещарска гробница. Капител
The Sveshtari tomb. Capital

Едикулата
The Aedicula

